



### **STANDARDIZATION IN THE NORTHEAST**

The North Atlantic Regional Medical Command (NARMC) and TRICARE Region 1 (TRICARE Northeast) have initiated a program for medical-surgical product standardization and purchasing in coordination with DSCP and supporting Prime Vendors. Standardization for the purposes of this effort is defined as an agreement among clinicians and logisticians within the region to use the same product exclusively for a certain procedure in order to gain cost savings and economies of scale through committed volume purchasing of standard high quality supplies.

Through this partnership, the Standardization Business Office (SBO) was formed. The SBO members, employed by McAdams Technologies, Inc., are Allan Arnette (a logistician), Paula Valentino (clinical nurse), A.J. Romero (data analyst), and Celia Hale (senior analyst). Their mission is to identify potential savings by analyzing requirements, surveying alternative products, establishing clinical equivalencies, and coordinating among regional activities. The SBO serves as the focal point for regional standardization, facilitating communication among the Services, providing data analysis, and integrating the efforts of DSCP, Prime Vendors, regional standardization groups, and Medical Treatment Facilities (MTFs). The team arrived at WRAMC during Dec 98, and has become an integral part of the region's Tri-Service Product Review Board (TPRB) standardization effort.

The TPRB, established over a year ago, identifies and pursues standardization and volume purchasing opportunities. Board members include clinicians from the three Services, clinician experts, logisticians, and the SBO staff. Under the leadership of COL Jonathon Kissane, Assistant Chief of Staff for Logistics in the NARMC, board members meet monthly, rotating sites among Malcolm Grow Medical Center, National Navy Medical Center, and Walter Reed Army Medical Center. During these meetings, a product line review is performed. This review includes historical volume used and cost. In most instances, a Tri-Service Clinical Product Team (CPT) is appointed to identify criteria for product selection, meet with vendors and conduct clinical trials. Upon completion of the product reviews, the board makes a recommendation of its choice of product and forwards it to the Federal Health Council for a final, binding decision.

Through these efforts, the TPRB has standardized over 12 products, including plastics, patient care products, needles, syringes, masks, gowns, pneumatic compression devices, elastic stockings, wound care products, sharps containers, sponges, tapes, and surgical pre-packs. Significant man-hours savings, previously devoted to administering the standardization process (i.e. writing minutes, establishing tracking mechanisms, and participating in the ongoing CPTs) are now being used to focus more closely on implementation to ensure savings are realized. The most recent example has been in the standardization of Custom OR Packs and Vendor Agreement monitoring in which over \$300K was saved. These achievements are the results of ongoing collaboration between the supporting Prime Vendor, the CPTs and the SBO, and demonstrates what can be accomplished as the process continues to mature.